



Equine Publications

One Riproarious Tale

by JACKIE BARNES

The Sport of Kings has produced a score of memorable characters. W. Cothran "Cot" Campbell, the master of Dogwood Stable, based in Aiken, South Carolina, ranks high on the list. In his new book *Memoirs of a Longshot...A Riproarious Life*, Campbell relates stories about his family, outrageous adventures, alcoholism, his stint in advertising and the people who have influenced his life.

He was born during 1927, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Campbell's father was a world record-setting pilot in the Army Air Corps in 1918. He was also an aspiring novelist who worked for Coca-Cola as a bottler in the 1930's. Before World War II, he made an unsuccessful venture in horse racing, but his son was hooked. His father's support in future business ventures would become invaluable.

Young Campbell dropped out of high school and served a short stint in the United States Navy near the end of World War II. He kicked around doing odd jobs before enrolling at the University of the South (Sewanee). Dropping out after two years, he headed to Florida and a shot at the "good life." Cot did everything from parking cars to working as an apprentice mortician. He also made time for an occasional afternoon visit to the nearby racetrack.

The story of Cot's long fight with alcoholism is inspiring. He described himself as "a drunkard that people would cross the street to avoid," but eventually he was able to bring himself back from the lowest point of his life to respectability after a tortuous battle.

Readers will enjoy the tale about his visit to the "hallowed" grounds of Keeneland Racecourse in Kentucky. He became so envious of the people watching their horses being paraded, saddled and winning races that he finally gave in and took the plunge into ownership.

The book follows the beginning of Dogwood Stable from the start, with Campbell's first purchase, a cheap claimer named Social Asset. The stable's first major success came in 1971, with Mrs. Cornwallis, a \$5,000 auction purchase. The story really takes off after her victory in the Alcibiades Stakes at Keeneland.

Through the winning efforts of their equine stars, the number of horses started increasing. So did their popularity through the foundation of Dogwood's racing partnerships. Little did Campbell know that after he had paid \$300,000 at auction for a yearling that he had hit the jackpot. That colt was Summer Squall.

The talented youngster took Campbell and Dogwood Stables on the ride of their life in pursuit of racing's Triple Crown. Summer Squall's thrilling victory in the 1990 Preakness Stakes was one for the ages and helped ease the pain of his loss in the Kentucky Derby.

After his racing career ended, Summer Squall sired the brilliant two-year-old filly, Storm Song. She would give Dogwood Stable their second championship, after her victory in the \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Stakes in 1996.

Campbell's work behind the scenes with different organizations for the benefit of racing is something in which he believes strongly. The formation of the Dominion Award is one of his proudest achievements. The award each year is given to one of racing's

"unsung heroes" for their contributions to the sport.

Even if you are not an aficionado of Thoroughbred racing or a sports junkie, this uplifting biography is a real gem. From his personal struggles all the way to achieving his dream in racing, this is one riproarious tale.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys an entertaining story. You will want to keep this book in your collection, as I will in mine, to read over and over again. 🐾

